



# Riders, walkers and wheelers in Devon and Cornwall

What they want from  
National Highways  
July 2024

# Introduction

When we think about National Highway’s roads we often think about motorways bustling with cars, lorries and motorbikes, but nearly half of its network is ‘A’ roads – used frequently by those riding, walking or wheeling.

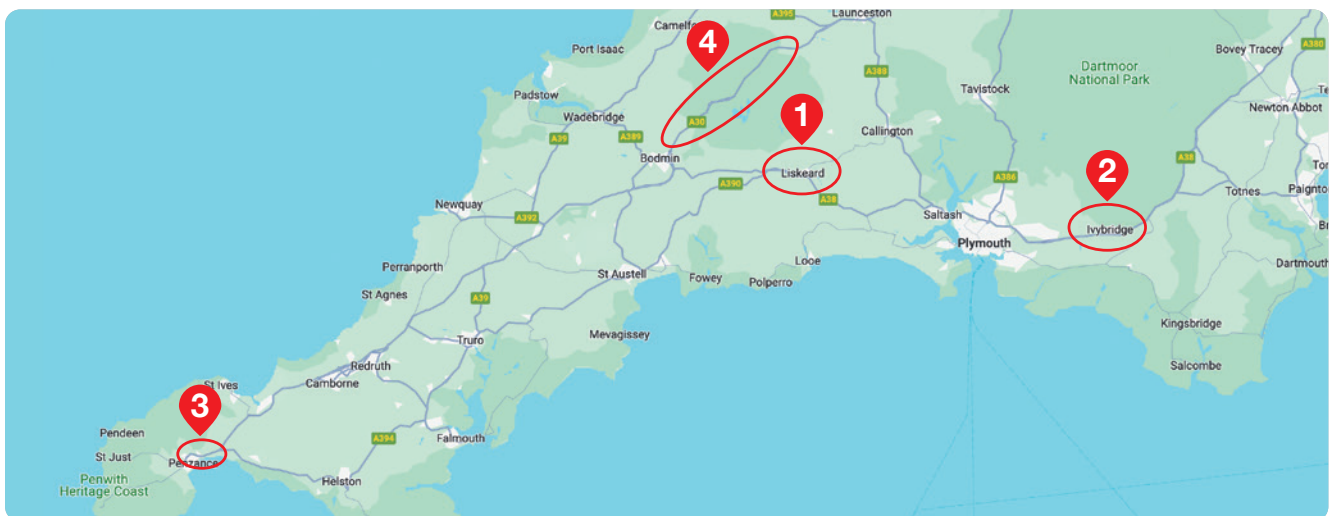
This research captures the experience of those road users – from the cyclist who needs to travel alongside a busy dual carriageway on a narrow path to the parent pushing a pram along a bumpy and poorly maintained route.

Transport Focus is the independent watchdog representing the interests of those using roads managed by National Highways. The research summarised here looks at its roads in Devon and Cornwall, the sixth area of the National Highways network we have looked at through the lens of riders, walkers and wheelers. Each study has produced location-specific findings, but there are also many common themes that run through the findings.

We use these themes to work with National Highways to address issues and establish best practice. These include the need for existing paths and crossings to be maintained properly in terms of vegetation, surfaces and signs – often things that require greater attention to detail, but are relatively cheap and simple to achieve. But the need to provide paths away from the traffic where they don’t already exist, and for more points to safely cross the main road, including to get to/from a bus stop on the other side are also common themes.

In this study we looked at the experiences of riders, walkers and wheelers at the following locations:

- 1 the A38 Liskeard, Cornwall: Old Road Junction to Lantroom Quarry.
- 2 the A38 Devon Expressway, Devon: Lee Mill Industrial Estate to Ivybridge.
- 3 the A30 Penzance, Cornwall: Chy-An-Mor roundabout; and
- 4 the A30: Bodmin to Trewint, Cornwall.



Map data ©2024 Google

Transport Focus has previously published similar research looking at the experiences of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. On this occasion the research was broadened to involve a wider range of road users. Riders, walkers and wheelers are defined in this research as follows:

- **Riders** – those making journeys on a horse.
- **Walkers** – pedestrians, including those with a pram, buggy, wheeled frame or similar mobility aid.
- **Wheelers** – those making journeys using a bicycle, tricycle, tandem, scooter, mobility scooter/buggy or wheelchair.

## Summary of findings

Using the resulting insight Transport Focus will:

- Work with National Highways to ensure it understands the interventions required to make journeys better for riders, walkers and wheelers at each case study site. Transport Focus will work with National Highways' South West region to help it prioritise minor interventions that will quickly make journeys better. Transport Focus will also help National Highways build the case for bigger interventions that may require capital investment.
- Continue to work with National Highways to ensure the priorities for improvement identified by riders, walkers and wheelers are implemented as best practice across its network. Picking up themes that emerge from this research, such as the severance of Public Rights of Way and deficiencies in day-to-day maintenance, Transport Focus will work with National Highways to ensure these themes are investigated and changes are implemented on a national scale. You can read more about our challenges to National Highways about maintenance on our website<sup>1</sup>.
- Continue to work with National Highways to ensure riders, walkers and wheelers are considered when infrastructure is enhanced and renewed. And that the organisation is actively developing and executing plans to bring poorly performing routes (from the perspective of these road users) up to standard.



The research produced many findings related to specific experiences at each of the four locations. These are covered at a high level in this report – the in-depth findings are in the research agency slides available on our website. There are also some overarching issues which are consistent with findings from Transport Focus's previous research.

At some of the locations covered by this research, paths alongside National Highways' roads provide good direct routes for riders, walkers and wheelers – taking them to places that it would otherwise be impossible to access by active travel means. At other locations good alternative routes are provided which, while not directly adjacent to the National Highways network, provide ways for active travellers to make successful journeys.

Where riders, walkers and wheelers speak positively about journeys at these locations they tend to mention aspects related to their safety – specifically their segregation from high-speed traffic. They also tend to mention aspects which are related to their ability to access dedicated paths: in particular, those with a relatively flat gradient, and good crossing points and surface quality.

While riders, walkers and wheelers speak positively about some aspects of these locations, to varying degrees they report issues with all of them that, if addressed, would improve their journeys. When talking about factors which make their journeys more difficult and uncomfortable, riders, walkers and wheelers are keen to point out that the paths provided for them often have poor lighting, poor maintenance of vegetation and surfaces, and low parapet heights on bridges – a particular concern of those riding horses.

For riders, walkers and wheelers it is often not the quality of the paths provided which is the issue, but the lack of any path at all. Riders, walkers and wheelers also told us that the absence of safe points to cross a National Highways road, or lack of dedicated paths to separate them from fast-moving traffic and/or other modes of active travel, prevented them from making satisfactory journeys.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/watchdog-challenges-national-highways-to-do-better-over-maintenance-of-paths-for-cyclists-and-walkers/>

## How might things be improved for riders, walkers and wheelers?

Within each of the location-specific reports a range of improvements are cited that riders, walkers and wheelers say would improve their experience. Overall, the common themes for types of improvements can be summarised as follows:

- **Address safety and security concerns**
  - Introduce traffic calming measures;
  - Improve lighting, visibility and infrastructure maintenance;
  - Increase parapet heights on bridges;
  - Provide a physical barrier between shared use paths and the carriageway (or re-route paths further away from it);
  - Introduce clear signage to show where routes are shared between different types of active traveller.
- **Introduce dedicated infrastructure**
  - Provide segregated routes for riders, walkers and wheelers, ensuring that shared use paths are continuous and provided on both sides of the road;
  - Provide accessible crossing points which follow the routes which people naturally want to take.
- **Improve road user access to and from the site**
  - Improve signage to indicate the routes which are suitable for riders, walkers and wheelers, particularly at critical points such as bridge crossings;
  - Those managing infrastructure should work together so that existing paths to key destinations are linked together.
- **Improve the environment on the path**
  - Maintain the surfaces of existing paths, including resurfacing them where necessary;
  - Provide waste bins along paths at regular intervals.
- **Improve the accessibility for mobility impaired walkers, walkers with prams and wheelers**
  - Improve the gradients of paths where possible;
  - Provide step-free access where appropriate along routes;
  - Widen footpaths and provide dropped kerbs.

# Location-specific findings

A short summary of the findings for each location is provided below, with detailed findings available in the research agency report on our website.

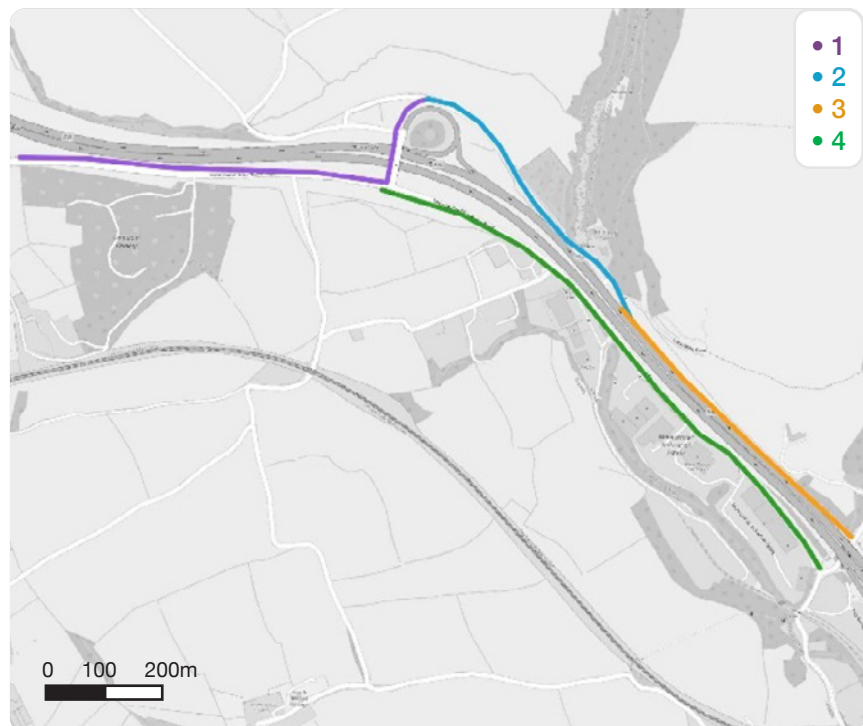
## A38 Liskeard, Cornwall: Old Road Junction to Lantroom Quarry



### Overview of the location

This location has a mix of residential and commercial properties and has a well-used footpath which runs alongside the A38. The location was divided into four sections:

- **Section 1:** The shared use path adjacent to the A38 passing by Lantroom Quarry and over the bridge to the Dobwalls Bypass
- **Section 2:** The continuation of the path alongside the A38 from Dobwalls Bypass past Loose Mills Farm and on to the Caradon Trail
- **Section 3:** The remaining part of the path alongside the A38 and onto Old Road
- **Section 4:** The path alongside the A38 as it runs on the side of the road, past the Moorswater Industrial Estate to finish at the top of the Dobwall Bypass where the shared path crosses the bridge.



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### Summary of issues identified by the research

Discussions with local stakeholders and site audits identified that this location has limited provision for horse riders; there are no paths for them on, adjacent to or across the A38 at Liskeard. Existing bridleways around the location were mentioned, though these are not felt to be well connected. The use of minor roads adjacent to the location, as an alternative to using the A38, is limited by steep gradients and the narrowness of these roads which could cause conflict between horse riders and road traffic.

Paths for walkers were perceived to be in relatively good condition, including the surface quality. However, challenges were reported regarding lack of lighting, noise pollution, lack of segregation between walkers and wheelers on shared use paths and steep gradients along sections of the path towards Old Road Junction.

Findings were similar with wheelers – specifically in relation to lack of lighting, noise pollution, lack of paths that both pedestrians and cyclists can use and steep gradients. In addition, stakeholders reported lack of dedicated wheeling infrastructure and limited access to some parts of the location; for example, lack of a path between Liskeard town and Moorswater Industrial Estate.

*“The stairs are a real barrier to people in wheelchairs, cyclists and people with pushchairs. This is part of a key route into town and replacing the stairs with a ramp should be a priority.”*

Walker, interactive map

Findings from those using the roads at this location aligned closely with the feedback we gathered from local stakeholders at the initial stages of the research. Other issues reported by road users included the difficulty in accessing paths, particularly for wheelchair users and wheelers, due to the lack of ramps, the steps on the paths coming off the westbound A38 slip road, and on the paths connecting to New Road.

*“Traffic moves too quickly and a separate trail to Moorswater is needed to allow safe access for walkers wheelers and cyclists.”*

Wheeler, interactive map



More positively, riders, walkers and wheelers mentioned that it is useful to have shared-use paths along both sides of the A38 at this location, with an underpass available to help them loop back around and cross the busy road. These road users also noted that there are places at this location where the width of the path allows walkers and wheelers to pass each other comfortably, as well as places where the surface quality is smooth and the gradient relatively flat.

*“It’s very good, cause the pavement coming down from the woods is quite wide, and is permissive for both cyclists and walkers.”*

Walker/wheeler, accompanied journey

## Recommendations for improvements at the A38 Liskeard location

- Improve **access** for mobility impaired walkers, walkers with prams, and wheelers, by:
  - Improving gradients along Sections 3 and 4;
  - Replacing the steps at Old Road with a ramp, with immediate intervention on the poor surface quality and slipperiness of the steps;
  - Widening the existing paths to create more passing space, particularly along Section 2 and the part of Section 3 that accesses Old Road;
  - Providing dropped kerbs on pavements to allow users to re-join the shared use paths along Sections 2 and 3;
  - Improving maintenance of riding, walking and wheeling infrastructure by regularly cutting back greenery.
- Address **safety and security** concerns by:
  - Provide low-level lighting for paths alongside the A38;
  - Introducing safe crossing points, particularly on the road where it passes Moorswater Industrial Estate;
  - Providing a physical barrier to separate traffic on the A38 from those using the path alongside the road.
- Introduce **dedicated infrastructure**, in particular:
  - Segregated routes for wheelers;
  - Cycle crossing infrastructure at junctions;
  - A continuous shared use path on both sides of the main road along Section 4.
- Improve **user access to and from the sections**, by:
  - Widening footpaths and providing dropped kerbs at entry points to main roads, such as New Road, to improve access for walkers with prams and wheelers;
  - Providing segregated footpaths, cycleways or shared use paths along the westbound A38 slip road which joins onto Old Station Road and connects to Section 4;
  - Improving **connectivity** of the site for horse riders, such as introducing a bridleway within the underpass to connect Looe Mills and minor roads, offering access to East Looe River and providing safe equestrian crossing points.



## A38 Devon Expressway, Devon: Lee Mill Industrial Estate to Ivy Bridge

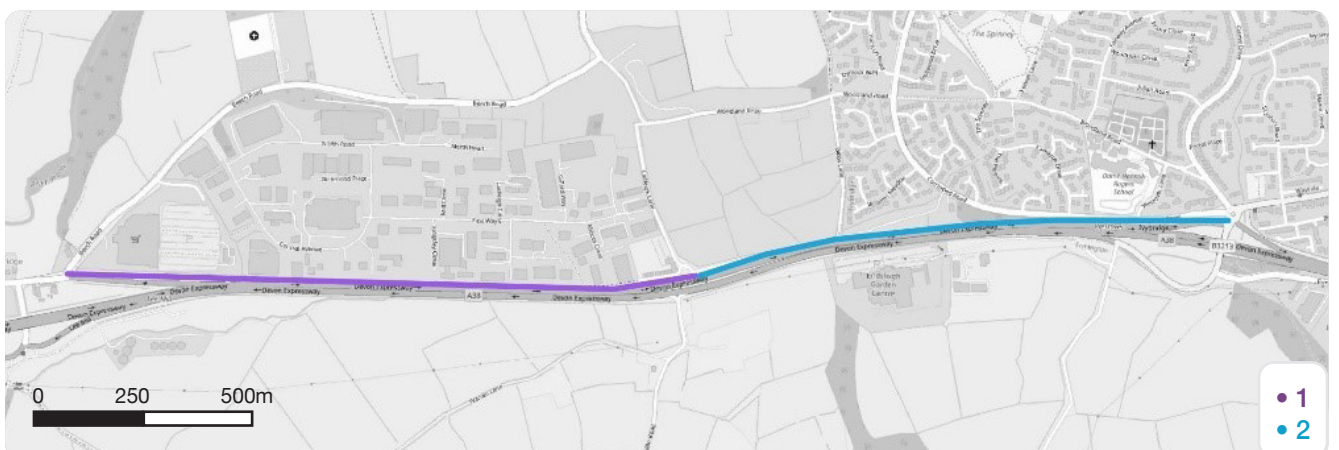


### Overview of the location

This location has a mix of industrial estates and residential buildings. The presence of Lee Mill Industrial Estate means that lorries often use the roads around the location. There is a plan to build a roundabout here in the future and stakeholders consider it important that the needs of wheelers and walkers are accommodated in its design.

For the purposes of the research the location was separated into two sections:

- **Section 1:** Runs between Lee Mills Industrial Estate towards Ivybridge village, ending at the junction of Cadleigh Lane and the A38 Devon Expressway.
- **Section 2:** Between the Cadleigh Lane / A38 Devon Expressway junction to Ivybridge town.



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## Summary of issues identified by the research

Conversations with stakeholders and site audits identified limited provision for horse riders at this location – there are no paths for them on, adjacent to, or across the A38 Devon Expressway. Existing provision for walkers was found to be poor across the whole of the location, and stakeholders identified challenges including lack of segregation between different types of active traveller; noise and air pollution; overgrown greenery; narrow paths; and lack of a physical barrier between them and fast-moving traffic on the A38.



Existing provision for wheelers was identified as being slightly better during site audits, however stakeholders noted similar challenges for them as for walkers. Stakeholders also noted that wheelers do not have access to a continuous cycle lane across the entire route, and that they are forced onto the carriageway where Beech Road meets the A38.

Findings from the road users themselves aligned with the findings from site audits and stakeholder conversations. Walkers and wheelers specifically mentioned narrow paths which led to a degree of conflict between them, safety concerns related to lack of a physical barrier between them and the A38 carriageway, poor maintenance of overgrown greenery and path surfaces, poor lighting, and noise and air pollution from the A38. These road users also discussed issues at some junctions due to fast moving traffic.

*“The path isn’t the widest when its cleared but with the overhanging vegetation on one side and the ever encroaching grass on the other it get narrower each year, more frequent maintenance needed.”*

Wheeler, interactive map

*“The major issue for me is safety and separating the fast moving traffic from cyclists and pedestrians by a safety barrier.”*

Walker, interactive map

There were a limited number of positive aspects mentioned about the location. They include that the routes available to riders, walkers and wheelers largely allow them to be separated from motorised traffic (notwithstanding the need for a physical barrier), that the route is relatively flat given the geographical context and the route offers connectivity between Ivybridge town and Lee Mill Industrial Estate.



### Recommendations for improvements at the A38 Devon Expressway Location

- Address **safety and security concerns** by:
  - Widening the shared use path using the grass verge, to reduce conflict between different users. Room should be left for the provision of a physical barrier between the shared use path and motorised traffic on the A38;
  - Introducing traffic calming measures on Beech Road and Cadleigh Lane, particularly at the junction of Beech Road and the A38 Devon Expressway;
  - Improving lighting along the route;
  - Introducing clear signage to show where the route is for shared-use;
  - Re-routing the shared use path to avoid interacting with motorised vehicles, for example re-routing north of the layby on Section 2.
- Improve **connectivity and ease of accessing the route** by:
  - Working with the local authority to provide additional links branching off from Section 2 to improve access to Ivybridge town centre;
  - Introducing additional crossings, both over the A38 and at the junction where Section 1 begins.
- Improve the **environment on the path** through:
  - Re-surfacing;
  - Undertaking regular maintenance of overgrown greenery including overhanging vegetation;
  - Providing dog waste bins along the route.

## A30 Penzance, Cornwall: Chy-An-Mor roundabout

### Overview of the location

The A30 is the main road leaving Penzance to the east, with the beach on one side and a mix of commercial and residential properties on the other. For the purposes of the research the location was divided into three sections:

- **Section 1:** Poniu Lane from the bridge over the A30 down to the South West Coast Path (1b), and

then along this path along the seafront to the west (1a).

- **Section 2:** Along the A30 (Eastern Green) to the Chy-An-Mor roundabout (2a), and the roundabout itself (2b).
- **Section 3:** The road past the Longrock Industrial Estate.



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The Chy-An-Mor roundabout is the only section of this location which is directly on the A30 and is a known accident hot-spot. At present, the roundabout has no dedicated infrastructure for riders, walkers or wheelers, and therefore it tends to be avoided by them, with the exception of some more confident cyclists. Findings at this location focus on the Chy-An-Mor roundabout as it is directly in the control of National Highways. The other sections are discussed more as alternative routes in the control of the local authority.

### Summary of issues identified by the research

There is no riding, walking or wheeling provision on the Chy-An-Mor roundabout, however wheelers are known to use it and cycle collisions have been reported. Horse riders have limited dedicated provision around this location despite often visiting Longrock Beach from areas north of the A30.

The South West Coast Path provides a high quality alternative route for walkers and wheelers wishing to cross the Chy-An-Mor roundabout. The path is relatively even and flat, but there are known pinch-points. Particularly, crossing back to the A30 via the Ponsandane footbridge is noted as an issue for wheelers and people with mobility impairments due to the presence of steps. Paths within Longrock Industrial Estate are also felt to provide good connectivity across the location, although these paths are felt to be inconsistent in terms of width and visibility. Findings from discussions with road users highlighted the challenges of riding, walking, or wheeling at the Chy-An-Mor roundabout. Nevertheless, the roundabout was felt to provide a direct route for wheelers (particularly cyclists) travelling to and from the Longrock Industrial Estate and Heliport Retail Park, including limited conflict with walkers who do not use the roundabout.

*“They haven’t thought about people walking near the roundabouts. You hardly see any cyclists around that area too.”*

Walker, accompanied journey



Road users felt that wheeler safety at the roundabout could be improved, specifically by reducing speed limits, adding traffic lights to junctions, or adding an overbridge or flyover (although this was noted as unlikely due to cost and disruption).

Despite the concerns raised about using Chy-An-Mor roundabout, riders, walkers, and wheelers noted that good alternative routes exist and that the coastal path offered high-quality, shared use access for them. Where improvements to these alternative routes were mentioned they focused on increasing segregation between walkers and wheelers, improving signage, introducing step-free access on the Posandane footbridge and improving the level crossing on Poniou Lane to enhance safety.

### Recommendations for improvements at the A30 Penzance Location

- National Highways should look to improve **safety** on its infrastructure at this location by:
  - Considering dedicated cycle infrastructure and traffic lights on Chy-An-Mor roundabout to improve wheeler safety;
  - Improving the bridge over the A30 at the northern end of Poniou Lane, to enhance safety for all user groups. This could include widening the bridge, increasing parapet heights, adding low level lighting and adding signage to indicate that the bridge is for shared use.
- And it should work with the local authority to improve **safety and accessibility** of alternative riding, walking and wheeling routes by:
  - Improving signage throughout the area to indicate routes that avoid Chy-An-Mor roundabout for riders, walkers, and wheelers, especially at critical points such as bridge crossings;
  - Introducing step-free access on the Ponsandane footbridge (which provides access back to the A30 if using the coastal path to avoid Chy-An-Mor roundabout);
  - Improving the level crossing on Poniou Lane to enhance safety, such as increasing visibility, widening the path either side of the crossing, and adding rider-specific provision, such as high-level crossing buttons;
  - Adding low-level lighting on the coastal path to reduce user conflict, particularly problematic in the dark;
  - Introducing circular routes to avoid Chy-An-Mor roundabout, including linking to existing National Highways improvements at Tolverth Row crossing, as well as the Penzance to St Ives active travel route.



## A30: Bodmin to Trewint

### Overview of the location

The A30 between Bodmin and Trewint travels through open country with a mix of residential and commercial properties close by. While the A30 itself is used by very few riders, walkers, and wheelers, the areas around this main road are well used by them.

For the purposes of the research, the location was divided into seven sections. However, our report focuses mostly on four of these:

- **Section 1:** Running from Launceston Road which runs out of Bodmin to Millpool.
- **Section 2:** Millpool to Temple.
- **Section 5:** Running up to the A30 slip road into Trewint.
- **Section 6:** The section of the site which includes the Halvana Plantation.

Since this part of the A30 is used by very few riders, walkers, or wheelers, the research concentrates on their use of local routes that run adjacent to or across the main road. Recommendations in the report are

divided between those which are within the control of National Highways, and those which would fall into the responsibility of the local authority.





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### Summary of issues identified by the research

Overall, the findings from stakeholder discussions identified some provision for walkers and wheelers on the roads adjacent to the A30. Sections 4 and 6 lack any designated infrastructure for these road users, sections 3 and 5 provide some dedicated infrastructure for riders, walkers and wheelers of varying quality, and sections 1 and 2 offer segregated routes. While the segregated routes are highlighted as a success, lack of maintenance of surfaces, the quality of the lighting, and the quality of the signage mean that riders, walkers, and wheelers still suggest improvements.

Provision for horse riders is limited on these parts of the A30, due to the main road severing many bridleways. When they do make journeys, horse riders tend to share routes with motorised traffic which is possible due to the width of the road. However, as with walkers and wheelers, lack of signage to alert people that horse riders are using the route is reported.

The bridges which have been provided over the A30 are welcome, however it is felt that there is limited awareness of them, and that parapet height might be an issue.

The views of riders, walkers and wheelers themselves align closely with those of stakeholders we spoke to. Common challenges mentioned include lack of dedicated and connected paths – including those crossing the A30, lack of maintenance resulting in overgrown vegetation and poor surfaces, and an issue with the lack of lighting – though the negative impact of increased lighting on the natural beauty of the area was recognised.

*“Would love to see the bridleways around here connected up as used regularly by us horse riders!”*

Rider, interactive map

*“The vegetation (in the footways) is getting so overgrown there’s hardly any space for me to walk.”*

Walker, accompanied journey

Despite these concerns, the road users involved in the research noted a strong sense of community in the area, in addition to an abundance of natural beauty which makes the location pleasant to make journeys through. Bridleways were referred to as the 'best in the county', despite being severed by the A30. Additionally, roads that run adjacent to the A30 are often quiet, providing ample space for riding, walking, and wheeling despite a lack of dedicated infrastructure.

*“Even with our high vis on, after dark, some cars may come too close to us... there isn't a lot of light in this area, so could do with a few more of those.”*

Rider, accompanied journey

### Recommendations for improvements at the A30 Bodmin to Trewint Location

- To **mitigate severance** caused by the A30, National Highways should consider:
  - Promoting existing overbridges to increase public awareness, for example, through signage;
  - Increasing parapet heights on existing overbridges over the A30 while considering the visual impact of this change;
  - Reconnecting severed bridleways which are described as 'some of the best in the county' to enhance accessibility;
  - Working with Sustrans to support the introduction of quiet lanes around Bodmin Moor, including traffic calming and speed limit reductions;
  - Introducing additional crossings over the A30, where there is demand.
- National Highways could **work with the local authority** to support riding, walking and wheeling in the local area by:
  - Establishing paths for walkers and wheelers to give easy access to/from Cardinham Woods and Bodmin;
  - Developing a path for wheelers between the first Blisland exit and Helland Road, and exploring additional routes for walkers around Millpool;
  - Increasing awareness of the routes by providing signage to promote existing bridleways, footpaths, and cycle routes;
  - Improving infrastructure maintenance, including vegetation and mud clearing;
  - Increasing lighting in the area close to the Jamaica Inn.

## How we did this research

In October 2023, Transport Focus commissioned the Social and Market Research team at the transport consultancy SYSTRA to help us to explore the views of riders, walkers and wheelers making journeys along routes that interact with roads managed by National Highways in Devon and Cornwall. SYSTRA first completed site familiarisation, including stakeholder engagement, and then undertook the user research.

The site familiarisation stage consisted of:

- A period of **stakeholder engagement** in which online interviews and focus groups were undertaken with a mixture of stakeholders representing National Highways, local authorities and other user groups at the locations to understand key issues.
- A stage of **systematic site audits** at which the infrastructure available for riders, walkers and wheelers was assessed using standard industry assessment criteria.

Following this, the user research was made up of:

- **Accompanied journeys and in-depth interviews** – researchers made journeys with riders, walkers and wheelers to understand user experience at the locations.
- **Business interviews** – people at businesses in the relevant locations were interviewed face-to-face to understand how their employees and customers found accessing the locations as riders, walkers or wheelers.
- **Digital ethnographic tasks** – riders, walkers and wheelers making journeys at the locations were invited to provide feedback using an online interactive map.

In total 16 accompanied journeys were undertaken, while 10 interviews were conducted with businesses and 45 responses gathered from the online map – a breakdown of these interviews is provided below. Fieldwork was undertaken in November and December 2023.

Site	Accompanied Journeys	Business Interviews	Online Interactive Map Responses
A38 Liskeard: Old Road Junction – Lantoom Quarry	1 with a wheeler and 2 with walkers	3	9 with walkers, 7 with wheelers and 2 others
A38 Devon Expressway: Lee Mill Industrial Estate – Ivybridge	1 with a wheeler and 2 with walkers	0	4 with walkers, 10 with wheelers and 3 others
A30 Penzance – Chy-An-Mor Roundabout	1 with a wheeler and 5 with walkers	6	1 with a walker
A30: Bodmin – Trewint	1 with a rider and 3 with walkers	1	3 with walkers, 4 with wheelers and 2 with horse riders
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45</b>

The demographic profile of those with whom accompanied journeys were conducted is shown below.

Site	User Type	Age Group	Gender	Frequency of site use	Disability Status
A38 Liskeard: Old Road Junction – Lantoom Quarry	1 with a wheeler and 2 with walkers	2 aged 31-64 and one aged 65+	3 men	2 frequent and 1 infrequent user	1 disabled user (disability undisclosed)
A38 Devon Expressway: Lee Mill Industrial Estate – Ivybridge	1 with a wheeler and 2 with walkers	2 aged 31-64 and one aged 65+	2 men and 1 woman	3 frequent users	1 disabled user – mobility impairment.
A30 Penzance – Chy-An-Mor Roundabout	1 with a wheeler and 2 with walkers	1 aged 18-30, 2 aged 31-64 and 3 aged 65+	3 men and 3 women	4 frequent users and 2 infrequent users	2 disabled users – mobility, hearing and visual impairments
A30: Bodmin – Trewint	1 with a rider and 3 with walkers	1 aged 18-30, 2 aged 31-64 and one aged 65+	1 man and 3 women	4 frequent users	1 disabled user - mobility, hearing and visual impairments

## Contact Transport Focus

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